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ABSTRACT

The report issued by the task force on foreign languages and international studies established in Ohio in response to the 1979 report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies presents two major recommendations. They are: (1) that the state superintendent of public instruction appoint a permanent advisory council on foreign languages and international studies, and (2) that the state department of education upgrade the requirements for certification of foreign language and international studies teachers and that teacher education and professional development programs in these fields be strengthened. The advisory council would have the responsibility of making more foreign language career information available through the schools, developing greater statewide awareness of the value of foreign language study and international understanding, and encouraging and assisting in the improvement of existing instructional programs and enrollments in those areas. Recommendations for the council's funding and administration are also made. Recommendations for upgrading teacher education and certification include requirements for demonstrated proficiency; coursework distribution, including applied linguistics, civilization and contemporary culture, literature, and psycholinguistics or psychology of language; and cross-training between foreign languages and international studies. The task force's background and its description and evaluation of Ohio's public school foreign language and international studies program efforts are also included. (MSE)

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REPORT OF THE OHIO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TASK FORCE

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The report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, Strength through Wisdom: A Critique of U. S. Capability, was released in October 1979. One of the recommendations included was that an an Advisory Council on Foreign Language and International Studies should be established within each state. In February 1981, Ohio State Superintendent of Public Instruction Franklin D. Walters appointed a Foreign Language Task Force to report on the status of foreign language study in the state of Ohio. Appointed to the Task Force were Herman J. Oellerich, President, ARMCO Building Systems Division, Middletown, Chairperson; Barbara Snyder, Spanish teacher, Normandy High School, Parma, Assistant Chairperson; Roswitha Burkey, German teacher, Grove City High School, South Western City Schools; James Donovan, Curriculum Coordinator, Madison County Schools, London; John Durden, Foreign Language Coordinator, Akron City Schools; George Groh, Superintendent, Geauga County Schools, Chardon; Jack Hoyt, Director of Marketing Research, Champion Spark Plug Company, and former President of Lucas County Board of Education, Toledo; Benjamin Lupica, Latin teacher, Mt. Vernon HS, Mount Vernon, Charles Manuel, Superintendent, Findlay City Schools; Daniel Raisch, Superintendent, Oakwood City Schools; Karl Runser, Managing Editor, The Athens Messenger; and Charles Wynne, Spanish teacher, Western Hills High School, Cincinnati. Reid Baker, State Foreign Language Consultant, Columbus, represented the Ohio State Department of Education.

This Task Force released its report in February 1983. The following is the complete text of the Task Force report.

Major Recommendations

1. That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction appoint a permanent Advisory Council on Foreign Languages and International Studies.

2. That the State Department of Education upgrade the requirements for the certification of foreign language and international studies teachers and that teacher education and professional development programs in these fields be strengthened and expanded.

I. Preface

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, public attention was focused on the condition of foreign language instruction and capability in the United States through statements such as:

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

At a time when interdependence is vital to international peace and to the nation's welfare and defense, the capacity of Americans to communicate effectively with other people is decreasing.

The final act of the Helsinki Accords commits the signatory states "to encourage the study of foreign language and civilization as an important means of expanding communication among people."

"The problem is serious and complex. Yet, unlike many other public issues confronting the nation, solutions are within reach...." (1). These solutions can best be developed at a local level.

In February 1981, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Franklin D. Walter organized a Task Force composed of educators and community persons to study the status of foreign language instruction in Ohio's secondary schools. In establishing the purpose of the Task Force, Dr. Walter set forth the following task:

1. To assist the Ohio Department of Education in responding and reacting to the Presidential Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies.

2. To examine the quality and quantity of instructional programs in foreign languages and cultures as they stand in Ohio schools and to recommend appropriate measures to strengthen such programs.

3. To recommend ways of encouraging the study of foreign languages and cultures in Ohio schools.

II. Recommendations:

A. That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction appoint a permanent Advisory Council on Foreign Languages and International Studies.

1. The Council should have the following purposes:

a) To determine foreign language career opportunities for Ohioans and to make this information available to teachers, foreign language supervisors, guidance counselors, school administrators, curriculum committees and local school board members.

- Emphasize the relationship between foreign language proficiency and career opportunities.

- Determine foreign language needs of Ohio business (which languages and how many positions).

b) To develop a statewide awareness by legislators, university and secondary educators, and members of the media, business community, and local school boards of the value of foreign language study and international understanding.

- Increase visibility of current foreign language programs.
- Compare Ohio's programs with national statistics.
- Identify exemplary or model Ohio foreign language programs.
- Identify Ohio foreign language educational and program needs.
- Emphasize the personal advantages of knowing another language.
- Seek business and foundation support to help promote foreign language programs.
- Promote awareness of the interdependence of Ohio, the nation and the international community.
- Promote awareness of foreign language ability as an essential component in the process of understanding and co-existing with other cultures and nations.

c) To encourage and assist in the improvement of existing foreign language and international studies programs.

- Explore ways that area schools can cooperate to offer a wider variety of foreign language programs.
- Encourage and support foreign language teacher involvement with professional foreign language organizations and attendance at conferences and workshops.
- Establish foreign language proficiency criteria for teachers and students.
- Provide more training and idea exchange on exemplary programs for local foreign language supervisors.
- Encourage use of more preservice and inservice time devoted to local foreign language improvement.
- Provide ideas, suggestions and recommendations concerning the use of technical aids (computers, etc.).

- Provide an information base and incentive for student exchange, teacher exchange and native language speakers.

- Develop effective means of improving foreign language teacher morale.

- Establish a statewide communications network to reach all foreign language teachers.

d) To encourage and assist in the expansion of foreign language and international studies enrollment.

- Promote student exchange programs.

- Support reinstatement of foreign language college entrance and graduation requirements.

- Encourage an increase in the number of foreign languages taught.

- Encourage an increase in the number of levels of foreign languages taught.

- Explore ways to increase foreign language programs at the elementary school level.

- Increase the awareness of guidance counselors regarding foreign language career opportunities.

- Consider the use of exploratory culture based programs to interest students in foreign language study.

- Encourage the enrichment of advanced course content to appeal to a broader range of student needs and interests.

2. The Advisory Council should be composed of educators, members of the business community, media representatives and other concerned citizens.

3. Initially one third of the council membership should be appointed for a term of two years, one third for a term of three years and one third for a term of four years; subsequent members shall serve three year terms.

4. Funding to support the activities of the Advisory Council should be solicited from private foundations and other areas of the private sector.

5. An annual budget with sufficient funds to allow for quarterly meetings of the Council, clerical and research

assistance, public awareness programs and foreign language improvement activities should be developed prior to the commencement of fund-raising activities.

B. That the State Department of Education upgrade the requirements for the certification of foreign language and international studies teachers and that teacher education and professional development programs in these fields be strengthened and expanded.

1. Require that language departments in approved teacher preparation institutions provide for demonstrated proficiency on the part of candidates for foreign language certification.

2. Recommend that foreign language course work leading to certification be well distributed among the following areas:

a) Applied linguistics including advanced language analysis and phonetics.

b) Civilization and contemporary culture.

c) Literature.

d) Psychology of language and/or psycholinguistics.

3. Encourage school districts to provide professional growth activities specifically related to foreign language education as a part of the organized in-service education program.

4. Encourage that, in addition to required courses, prospective teachers of foreign language have completed course work in international studies and that prospective teachers of international studies have completed course work in foreign language.

III. Background

A. The Presidential Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies:

1. The Task Force has examined the report of November 1979 and the recommendations therein.

2. The central thrust of the commission's report is the need for federal assistance to create an awareness in the states of the value of foreign language and cultural studies and to offer staff and financial assistance to implement and improve language and cultural study programs arising out of such awareness.

3. Although the Task Force is in agreement with the premise (see below) of the commission's findings and supports its recommendations, it believes the solution to Ohio's language and cultural studies needs must lie within the state as little support can be expected from federal sources.

4. As will be seen in succeeding sections of this report, there are bright spots in Ohio's current language situation. But there is also considerable need for improvement and expansion of the program. The Task Force believes the following excerpt from the introduction of the Presidential Commission's report accurately describes its own findings and clearly enunciates the reasons why improvement and expansion are necessary:

"The final act of the Helsinki Accords commits the signatory states 'to encourage the study of foreign language and civilization as an important means of expanding communication among people.' To help realize this goal, the President's Commission has devoted a year to an intensive evaluation of the state of foreign language and international studies and their impact on the nation's internal and external strength. We are profoundly alarmed by what we have found: a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity, at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political, and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity, and public sensitivity.

The problem extends from our elementary schools, where instruction in foreign languages and cultures has virtually disappeared, to the threatened imminent loss of some of the world's leading centers for advanced training and research on foreign areas. Such specific educational neglect, moreover, is reflected in public uncertainty about the relationship between American interests and goals and those of other peoples and other cultures.

Nothing less is at issue than the nation's security. At a time when the resurgent forces of nationalism and of ethnic and linguistic consciousness so directly affect global realities, the United States requires far more reliable capacities to communicate with its allies, analyze the behavior of potential adversaries, and earn the trust and the sympathies of the uncommitted. Yet, there is a widening gap between these needs and the American competence to understand and deal successfully with other people in a world of flux.

National security, moreover, cannot safely be defined and protected within the narrow framework of defense, diplomacy, and economics. A nation's welfare depends in large measure on the intellectual and psychological strengths that are derived

from perceptive visions of the world beyond its own boundaries. On a planet shrunken by the technology of instant communications, there is little safety behind a Maginot Line of scientific and scholarly isolationism. In our schools and colleges as well as in our public media of communications, and in the everyday dialogue within our communities, the situation cries out for a better comprehension of our place and our potential in a world that, though it still expects much from America, no longer takes American supremacy for granted. Nor, the Commission believes, do this country's children and youths and it is for them, and their understanding of their own society, that an international perspective is indispensable. Such a perspective is lacking in most educational programs now.

The problem is serious and complex. Yet, unlike many other public issues confronting the nation, solutions lie within reach..."

C. Evaluation of current programs of study in foreign language and cultures in Ohio public schools (2).

1. Foreign Language Enrollment

At a time when secondary school foreign language enrollment nationwide has been declining, enrollment in Ohio language programs has remained relatively strong.

a) The most recent national survey, based on enrollment data for the 1978-79 school year, showed that approximately 20.4 percent of Ohio public school students in grades 7 through 12 are enrolled in foreign language courses as compared to 17.8 percent nationwide. Only 13 states--all but one of these in the east and northeast where emphasis on foreign language study has traditionally been strong--had a higher percentage of foreign language enrollment...

b) A representative sample of Ohio public high schools surveyed in 1981 reported 23.1 percent of all students in grades 9 through 12 are enrolled in foreign language courses. One reason for Ohio's strong foreign language enrollment is that state minimum standards require high schools to "schedule and operate each year...in separately organized classes with students enrolled" at least two units (years) of foreign language. Most high schools exceed this minimum by a considerable margin, with a few schools scheduling 20 units or more. Only three of Ohio's 743 public high schools fail to meet the two-unit requirement. The new standards slated for implementation in 1983 will increase the minimum to

three units of a single language, or if two languages are scheduled, two units of each.

c) A national study conducted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages recently identified three Ohio programs as being among the 50 most "successful" foreign language programs in the United States. The entire Akron foreign language program, grades 6 through 12, the Latin program at Columbus Northland High School, and the Brecksville High School German program were cited for the extent to which they attract and retain studens, as well as for their capacity to develop readily measurable language proficiency.

d) Unique in Ohio and one of the few programs of its kind in the country is Cincinnati's "bilingual" program, more properly termed a semi-immersion elementary school foreign language program. Approximately 2300 pupils, kindergarten through eighth grade, enrolled in eight magnet elementary schools and one middle school, spend from one-fourth to one-half of each day learning their various school subjects in French, Spanish, or German. The program, now in its tenth year of operation, has achieved results in terms of the pupils' foreign language proficiency---with no adverse effects on their English reading and mathematics achievement, which is consistently well above both national and citywide averages.

e) Ohio students have performed generally well on the College Entrance Board foreign language achievement tests. Although Spanish achievement scores have been below the national average since 1976, French and German scores have been above it, as has Latin for every year but one. No Ohio students have taken the Russian, Hebrew or Italian achievement tests in recent years.

f) In 1981, the Advisory Commission on Articulation between Secondary Education and Ohio Colleges, appointed by the Ohio Board of Regents and the State Board of Education, proposed three years of high school foreign language as part of a college preparatory program that would admit the student unconditionally to the private and state-assisted four-year colleges and universities. The Advisory Council on College Preparatory Education, charged with implementation of the Commission's proposals, has recommended three years of foreign language for unconditional admission to college and university programs requiring foreign language, and two years for admission to other programs. Also included in the college preparatory program would be four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies, including one year of world history.

2. Program Characteristics

Characteristically, Ohio foreign language programs begin in the ninth grade, offer Spanish, French, German and Latin, and consist primarily of Levels I through IV of the various languages.

a) According to a 1981 survey by the State Department of Education, 74 percent of school districts reported that foreign language programs begin in the ninth grade. Of the state's 2953 elementary schools, 10.8 percent representing 120 school districts have foreign language programs encompassing at least one grade level, and 92 schools representing 51 school districts have foreign language programs in grades seven and eight or in grade eight.

b) Pre-ninth grade programs are generally of two types.

- The academic program, which may include one or more languages, provides a given student instruction in a single language, preparing him or her for more advanced work in that language at the senior high level. In most cases, the equivalent of the first high school year of study (Level I) is completed before the ninth grade, making it possible for the district to offer a fifth level of study--or even a sixth if more work is completed early. Ideally, the program is carefully coordinated to assure sequential learning with a minimum of repetition in course content from one instructional level to another. When it is not, a high rate of student dropout, frequently coupled with misunderstanding and mutual recrimination among teachers, usually results.

- The exploratory program may be more accurately characterized as a course, since it usually lasts one year or less. In most exploratory programs, students receive introductory instruction in one language and its related culture for six to twelve weeks, then move on to another language, eventually sampling all the languages offered in the district's high school curriculum. The major purpose is to give the students an initial experience in foreign language learning as a basis for their decisions regarding language study at the high school level. The exploratory program's relatively low cost and complexity help to explain its popularity among the increasing number of school districts that consider it important to give pre-high school students a foreign language experience but cannot maintain a full academic-type program.

c) In terms of both the number of students enrolled and the number of schools where languages are taught, Spanish, French, German, and Latin predominate in Ohio schools.

- Spanish was scheduled in 87.6 percent of the high schools surveyed in 1981, French was scheduled in 83.3 percent, German in 31.8 percent, and Latin in 26.8 percent. In the same year, approximately 87,000 Ohio public high school students were enrolled in Spanish, 59,000 in French, 23,000 in German, and 11,000 in Latin, as compared to 634 in Italian, 303 in Russian, 120 in Hebrew, and 23 in classical Greek. Currently, no school district offers Japanese, Portuguese, or Arabic despite the importance of these languages in international trade and diplomacy, and Chinese is taught in only one school district, Toledo City, with 16 students enrolled in the fall of 1982.

- The predominance of the traditional languages in Ohio's secondary schools generally reflects the status of college and university foreign language programs throughout the state. Since few of the institutions of higher learning offer the less-commonly taught languages, there is little incentive for school districts to do so. Contributing to this situation, and at the same time resulting from it, is an acute shortage of teachers qualified to teach these languages. Even if a school district wished to add one of these languages to its curriculum, teachers with the proper certification would be difficult if not impossible to find.

d) According to the 1981 survey, foreign language course offerings consist primarily of Levels I through IV of the various languages scheduled as separate classes.

- Third year courses are scheduled in 77.5 percent of the surveyed schools, and fourth year courses in 52.9 percent. Fifth year courses are scheduled in 18.8 percent of the schools, and 16.7 percent operate advanced college placement courses. Alternative courses for "less able or less committed language learners" were reported by 6.5 percent of the schools, and 2.2 percent reported foreign language exploratory courses.

- Co-scheduled classes, containing students at more than one instructional level, were reported by just over 47 percent of the respondents. Of these schools, 60 percent have combined third and fourth year or fourth and fifth year classes, while 40 percent have classes in which second year students are co-scheduled with others. Such co-scheduled classes occur because the number of enrollees at a given instructional level is judged by school officials to be too low to justify a separate class. Advanced classes are particularly subject to co-scheduling because of the relatively small numbers of students continuing language study beyond the second year. In smaller schools, however, especially those with a low percentage of students preparing for college, the total number of foreign language enrollees may be so small that they are all, including the beginners, placed in a single class. Al-

most 10 percent of the survey schools reported first year students assigned to classes with others in the second, third, and even fourth year of study.

e) In general, Ohio foreign language course offerings have increased during the five years preceding the survey.

- During the five years preceding the survey, 57.2 percent of the responding school districts added foreign language offerings of various kinds (new language, third and/or fourth year courses, advanced placement, conversation, junior high academic, exploratory) to the curriculum, while only 35.5 percent deleted the same kinds of offerings. Twenty-one percent of the districts dropped one or more languages while only 15 percent added new languages. Only 8.7 percent of the high schools, however, dropped advanced courses, while 34.8 percent added them.

- During the preceding five years, 32.7 percent of the responding high schools reported that foreign language enrollment percentage had increased, 38.5 percent said that it had been stable, and 28.8 percent reported a decreasing enrollment percentage.

3. Adjunct factors

a) The 1981 survey revealed a significant positive relationship between total school enrollment and the number of full-time foreign language teachers in the schools. Of the responding schools, 45.7 percent had only full-time teachers and 18.8 percent reported having only part-time language teachers. No relationship was found, however, between school enrollment and the number of teachers with a part-time foreign language assignment.

b) Of the 347 foreign language teachers in the responding schools, 59 percent had a bachelor's degree, 40 percent had a master's degree, and three teachers or 0.8 percent held a doctoral degree. Of these teachers, 31 percent had five years teaching experience or less, 44 percent had been teaching for 6 to 15 years, and 25 percent had more than 15 years of service. Almost half of the teachers (48.5 percent) were members of state foreign language professional organizations, but only 26.8 percent belonged to national organizations in their field. Almost 83 percent reported having traveled, studied, or resided in countries related to the languages they teach.

c) No relationship was found between school size and the adequacy of either supplementary instructional materials or audiovisual equipment.

- The supply of supplementary materials was judged to be "abundant" by 13.3 percent of the schools, "adequate" by 44.4 percent, and "limited" by 42.2 percent. Audiovisual equipment was rated as "abundant" in 12.7 percent of the schools, "adequate" in 53.7 percent, and "limited" in 33.6 percent. About one fourth, 24.5 percent, of the schools had no textbook-correlated tapes for modern language courses.

- Only 37 percent of the schools had electronic practice facilities: i.e., booth-type language laboratories, wireless systems, or portable systems. Of these schools, 38 percent reported that facilities were used regularly, while 38 percent indicated that they were used only occasionally, and 24 percent indicated that they were used rarely or never.

d) Almost two-thirds (62.7%) of the respondents indicated that the foreign language is used often in class, and 9.5 percent reported that it is used totally. In more than one-fourth of the schools, however, the language was used in classes rarely or never (4.8%) or only occasionally (23%).

B. Ohio and the World

The State of Ohio is endowed with an enormous potential for improving the life of its citizenry and the citizens of the country and world at large. It is a major crossroads of the nation and the world, and it has enviable resources of water, minerals and arable lands.

1. The following facts give evidence of the tremendous importance of the State of Ohio in a world society that is becoming increasingly interdependent:

a) Ohio is a leading exporter of manufactured goods and products. In 1980, its export shipments were valued at $18.2 billion, ranking it third among all states in the export of manufactured items.

b) In 1980, 199,800 manufacturing jobs in Ohio were related to export shipments -- 3 out of every 20 jobs in manufacturing.

c) Ohio farm exports in 1981 were valued at $1.6 billion ranking it 9th among all states in the export of agricultural products.

d) In 1981, 30,000 farm jobs in Ohio were related to export shipments -- 1 out of every 4 jobs in farming.

e) Numerous Ohio manufacturing firms have plants in foreign countries, or joint ventures with foreign concerns or license arrangements to engage in foreign production.

f) The State Department of Economic and Commerical Development maintains two overseas offices (Europe and Asia) for the purpose of assisting foreign companies to invest in Ohio and create additional jobs for our citizens.

g) Legal firms, consulting firms, accounting firms and similar service organizations wtih headquarters in Ohio have branches in other countries.

h) Foreign interests have invested millions of dollars in Ohio in industry, agriculture, mining and other business enterprises.

2. During the period 1980 - 1982, the Ohio Modern Language Teachers Association conducted surveys of companies in Columbus, Toledo, Akron, and Cincinnati in an effort to find out whether knowledge of a second language was beneficial to the organization involved. There were 1102 letters mailed and 387 responses received (slightly better than 35% of the companies surveyed).

a) Of the respondents, 201 (52%) felt that knowledge of a foreign language was valuable to some or all of their personnel; in many cases, however, the need was for only one or two persons.

b) About one third of the companies that felt foreign language knowledge was useful had hired persons specifically for foreign language ability, and a small number of companies were providing foreign language training internally.

c) Of the 186 firms that responded negatively to the question of the need for foreign language, none was involved in export of foreign trade of any kind.

d) The survey questioned what type personnel (position or assignment) were most likely to need foreign language ability. By far, the majority ranked the management or executive area first, and a strong second was secretarial staff. Most companies responded that it was desirable to have total command of the language used including language related business or technical training. Few companies indicated a need for survivial skills only.

e) The survey found that, of the languages most needed, the predominant need is Spanish, followed closely by French

and German. The other needs mentioned were Japanese, Italian and Portuguese with a very few requirements for Chinese and Russian.

IV. Summary

There is ample evidence of Ohio's social and economic interdependence within the world community. The relationship between success in international business and diplomacy on the one hand and the ability to communicate in other languages on the other is widely recognized.

The President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies documented the nation's critical need for foreign language proficiency and its massive deficiencies in educating citizens to meet this need.

Within this deplorable national framework, statistics show that Ohio has a comparatively well established foreign language program. There are, however, numerous areas in which Ohio's foreign language education program can be improved in order to meet the increasing business and cultural needs of Ohio's citizens for foreign language proficiency.

This Task Force, therefore, makes the following major recommendations:

1. That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction appoint a permanent Advisory Council on Foreign Languages and International Studies.

2. That the State Department of Education upgrade the requirements for the certification of foreign language and international studies teachers and that teacher education and professional development programs in these fields be strengthened and expanded.

Notes

1 From the Presidential Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies.

2 Approximately eight percent of Ohio secondary students attend non-public schools and are not included in the statistics given in this report.